

# FMS Foundation Newsletter

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April 3, 1995

Dear Friends,

*"Remarkably, however, this debate appears to be completely bypassing many of the therapists, child abuse workers and sexual assault counsellors who have banded together to combat ritual abuse. After years of exposure to abuse cases, these counsellors are adamant that there is nothing unbelievable about the vivid detail of the stories they are hearing, and many view the current debate as a "backlash" against their cause."*

This quote from the *The Sydney Morning Herald* (February 1, 1995 "Demons from the past" Richard Guilliatt) took on a reality for us at a recent meeting about the recovered memory controversy held at the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC).

*"It's not enough to speak with impartiality. The price you pay is to be attacked by both sides," said Richard Kluft, a psychiatrist at Temple University. Kluft, who usually is identified as a supporter of the recovered-memory movement, said he had been roundly booed in the past when he had dared suggest to partisan audiences that a good therapist doesn't always believe what a patient says he remembers." (Kansas City Star, April 2, 1995 "The issue: Memories of sexual abuse" by Alan Bayley).*

The fact that a group of professionals booed anyone for saying that 'a good therapist would not always believe what a patient says he remembers' is surely a sign that the scientific information that has become so public as a result of this debate has bypassed those particular therapists.

The KUMC meeting on March 31 and April 1 brought together leading experts on both sides of the recovered memory debate. There were several points of agreement among all participants: sexual abuse is a problem, people can have false memories and memory is reconstructive. An observer might ask, "If there is agreement on these basic points, why is there still a controversy?"

"This issue cannot be solved on a scientific basis," said John Briere, Ph.D. in his talk. Is he right? The presentations at this meeting certainly demonstrated that some people address the controversy of recovered memories through science and others rely on conviction.

A man with a conviction is a hard man to change. Tell him you disagree and he turns away. Show him facts or figures and he questions your sources. Appeal to logic and he fails to see your point. We have all experienced the futility of trying to change a strong conviction, especially if the convinced person has some investment in his belief. We are familiar with the variety of ingenious defenses with which people protect their convictions, managing to keep them unscathed through the most devastating attacks.

Festinger et al (1956) *When Prophecy Fails*, U of Minnesota Press

quoted in Michael A. Simpson, "Gullible's Travels, or the importance of being multiple"

*Dissociative Identity Disorder: Theoretical and Treatment Controversies* (Editors: Cohen, Berzoff & Elin), Jason Aron-

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The presentations of James Garbarino, Ph.D., Martin Seligman, Ph.D., Paul McHugh, M.D., Elizabeth Loftus, Ph.D. and David Holmes, Ph.D. all provided scientific data that support the concern that the practices of some recovered memory therapists are risky. Linda Williams, Ph.D. presented scientific data that showed that some people can forget or do not report abuse, and Bessel van der Kolk, M.D. presented scientific data and speculated about the mental mechanisms of implicit memory. Kenneth Pope, Ph.D. presented data that indicated that the problem is widespread.

The cornerstone of the recovered memory controversy is the notion of "repression." David Holmes reminded the audience. Since it is a logical impossibility to prove that repression does not exist, it is the responsibility of those who make the claim of recovered repressed memories to provide evidence that satisfies the scientific community. That has not been done. Holmes presented a review of 70 years of research on repression. While there is agreement that laboratory research had failed to find this phenomenon, recovered memory proponents have argued that studies of traumatic amnesia in war veterans are proof of repression's existence. A careful analysis of this body of research, however, notes serious flaws: biological causes for amnesia were not ruled out and most of the recovered memories came during amyntal interviews.

Recovered memory proponents have also argued that retrospective studies in which people are asked if there was ever a time that they forgot past abuse are proof of repression. Holmes presented several cogent reasons to explain why such a conclusion is not warranted because of the methods used in these studies.

'Repression' and 'dissociation' seem to be synonymous, Holmes noted. This is an important point because in recent years the discussion about 'repression' has been reframed as a discussion of 'dissociation.' Later in the meeting, Mary Harvey, Ph.D. said that repression and dissociation were not synonymous, but she did not explain how they were different. During the question period, she was asked explicitly by the moderator to give an example of reported repression that she would not accept. This would give an operational distinction of the difference that she claimed existed. Neither she nor anyone else on the panel answered this important question.

Richard Kluft, M.D., Judith L. Alpert, Ph.D., John Briere, Ph.D., and Mary Harvey, Ph.D., presented papers stating that laboratory science is not appropriate for understanding traumatic memories and they noted the importance of clinical experience and clinical science in this area. They did not present data.

The KUMC conference was a forum in which data from leading experts was presented in support of their positions. Advocates of traumatic recovered memory, however, continue to state their case as one of conviction. It is their ethical responsibility to support their beliefs and clinical impressions with data that satisfy standard scientific criteria. At the very least, they should provide outcome studies for such a controversial therapy. The KUMC conference has made it clear how much work remains for the FMS Foundation.

What does a look at some of the non-scientific events at the KUMC conference show? We noted that Judith Alpert, Ph.D. criticized Loftus and McHugh for using *The Courage to Heal* as an example. She indicated that it and other pop psychology books were not representative of what trained and responsible therapists do. How should Loftus and McHugh respond to such criticism? *The Courage to Heal* is the most widely recommended book that therapists give to patients. Its very first line—at the top of the cover—is an endorsement by Judith Herman, M.D., perhaps the single most eminent person in the recovered memory movement.

Although KUMC sponsored the conference, James Kemper, the well-known Kansas businessman from the prestigious philanthropic family, provided support for and was in much evidence at the meeting. With Kemper at the meeting was his step-daughter, who often speaks about her "recovered memories" of abuse from age 3 to 27 by her biological father. On the second day of the conference, Kemper walked over to Elizabeth Loftus and David Holmes and said essentially that they and their associates were "slime." Loftus asked him why if he felt that way, had she been invited. Kemper replied that she was a drawing card to sell tickets. A member of the University Staff later apologized to Loftus and Holmes and to this writer for Mr. Kemper's remarks.

While most of the KUMC conference was positive and polite, it deteriorated into personal attacks by Kenneth Pope, Ph.D. against some of the participants who have questioned the evidence for recovered memory claims. Unfortunately, Pope did not allow this session to be taped. That is a loss to history. When a conference closes at the level of personal attack, it is reasonable to conclude that those attacking have no intellectual arguments left.

*Pamela*

"We need also to be tough-minded about tender-minded topics. Although we need to acknowledge that the scientific method may not be able to provide all the answers that are needed, and that our training as scientist-practitioners may have its limitations, the scientific approach is the most defensible that we have."

Kevin M McConkey, Ph.D.

Australian Psychologist March 1995 Vol 30 No 1

## Divided Memory PBS FRONTLINE Documentary Ofra Bikel and Karen O'Connor

On April 4 and April 11, Frontline will present a 4-hour documentary on the issue of repressed memory and the 'recovery movement.' A review in the *Wall Street Journal* by Rabinowitz notes "for the therapy schools in question, this is most certainly not good news."

### Many new articles and books

We have received copies of many new articles and several books this month that will be of special interest to readers because of their critical perspective on the issue of recovered memories. While we will request permission to make these available through the Foundation, we cannot do so at this time.

#### BOOKS

##### *CULTS in our midst*

Margaret Thaler Singer with Janja Lalich  
Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco

##### *Dissociative Identity Disorder*

Lewis Cohen, Joan Berzoff, and Mark Elin, Editors  
Jason Aronson Inc., 1995, Northvale, NJ

This book in three sections 1. Does Dissociative Identity Disorder Exist? 2. Theoretical Controversies 3.Treatment Controversies. Of special interest will be articles by: Harold Merskey, August Piper, Jr., and Michael A. Simpson.

##### *Diagnosis for Disaster*

Claudette Wassil-Grimm  
Overlook Press, New York

#### ARTICLES

"Challenge to psychotherapy: An open letter to psychotherapists concerning clinical practice as seen through the lens of the "recovered" or "false memory "debate" by Spencer Harris Morfit in the *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy*, Vol 20 no 4 1994, pp 233-244

"Rape of psychotherapy" by Ronald E. Fox in *Professional Psychology Research and Practice* 26 # 2 147-155 1995

"What's the story?" by Paul R. McHugh in *American Scholar*, Spring 1995, 191-203

"Witches, multiple personalities, and other psychiatric artifacts" by Paul R. McHugh in *Nature Medicine*, Vol 1 No 2, February 1995 p 110-114.

#### NEWSPAPER

"All-New Sins of the Fathers" by Dorothy Rabinowitz in *Wall Street Journal*, April 3, 1995.(Review of Frontline program)

"Amirault Case," Review & Outlook in *Wall Street Journal*, March 27, 1995

"Darkness in Massachusetts II" by Dorothy Rabinowitz in *Wall Street Journal*, March 14, 1995

## Retractor's Response to Colin A. Ross

I would like to respond to a specific portion of Colin A. Ross's letter that was published in the February FMSF Newsletter in which he stated:

"It is true that there are impaired therapists practicing in the dissociative disorders field. I believe, based on my clinical experience, that some patients with Satanic ritual abuse memories are suffering from DSM-IV dissociative disorder not otherwise specified resulting from exposure to coercive persuasion and indoctrination in a destructive psychotherapy cult. However, the false memories are only a minor component of the problem clinically. Why? What is really harming patients and families is generic bad clinical practice and basic ethical and boundary violations. It is possible to have false memories in good therapy and no false memories in bad therapy."

The problem is not the existence of the false memories as such, it is how they are managed and handled in therapy."

As someone who experienced false memories from exactly what Dr. Ross described, a therapy cult, I beg to differ with his judgment that the false memories are merely a 'minor component of the problem'. It was the content of the false memories which led me to believe that I was molested by my father and then included my mother, that I was satanically ritually abused by my grandfather and my mother and a host of others. It was the content of the memories that totally alienated me from my parents and led to my complete inability to function as a wife, a mother, a daughter, sister, nurse. The content of the memories led me into a nightmare world where I was unable to discern what was real and what was not. I lived in total fear, for my life even, for months on end, that grew into years.

It was not until the false memories of satanic ritual abuse were well entrenched that my former therapist diagnosed me as having MPD, which led to yet another year of my further deterioration. One wonders if Dr. Ross bothers to listen to his patients if he truly believes the content of the memories are of only minor significance. Can he not imagine the horror of believing that those you loved and trusted were involved in unspeakable crimes against you? Can he not perceive that the very thought processes that continue from believing these lies can lead on into a world of unreality and madness?

My former therapist has testified that he still believes that my mother is a satanist, that my father molested me. Is Dr. Ross unable to see that there is something incredibly wrong with this picture? It was my therapist's delusional belief system and techniques involving suggestion and persuasion that led me to believe the lies were memories. When I doubted the reality of the memories he insisted they

were true. Not only did he insist they were true, he informed me that in order to get well I must not only accept them as real, but remember them all.

If this is a 'minor component of the problem' to Dr. Ross, I would like to point out to him, as a former patient who believed false memories, that he needs to spend a lot more time listening to his patients as to the importance or lack therein of the so-called 'memories'. If my false memories had been so benign, I doubt they would have come so close to destroying me and my family. Perhaps Dr. Ross should spend some hours with families like mine, like yours, before defining what is actually the cause of the harm. Perhaps Dr. Ross should experience the reality of being falsely accused as a child molester before so cavalierly dismissing the relevance of the content of false memories.

It is also true that the content of the memories kept me from working on real problems with my family, whatever they might have been when I entered therapy. That there were problems my family and I don't deny. That we were ever going to be able to dialogue and communicate about real problems, however, was precluded by the fact that my personal history had been totally rewritten and was not longer anything my family could have recognized, let alone dealt with. This is one of the many tragedies of false memories and the therapy that produces them.

These are my thoughts from my own personal experiences that I felt it was important to share. My heart continues to go out to all of you who have been falsely accused. I am ever grateful for my loving family who never gave

up hope that I would come to my senses, forgave me the immense pain and suffering I caused them and accepted me with unconditional love when I finally awoke from the trance.

Sincerely,  
Diana Halbrooks

It was significant that *retractors* chose that term rather than the term *recanters*. To recant implies that something had been taught. To retract shows that the person is taking responsibility for his or her own actions.

Allen R. Dyer, MD, Ph.D.  
Keynote Lecture at conference on  
Childhood Sexual Abuse and Memories  
University of Kansas Medical Center,  
March 31, 1995

## Retractor Concerns

For information about the Retractor's Newsletter:

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### Abuse victims linked to cosmetic surgery

Guardian News, Dec, 1994, Andrew Wilson

"An alarming number of women are opting for nose jobs, breast reductions, tummy tucks and face lifts as a way to cope with childhood sexual abuse, according to Eileen Bradbury, psychologist in the department of plastic and reconstructive surgery at Withington Hospital in Manchester, northern England. She says 'Some women think that by changing a certain feature, they'll be able to erase traumatic memories of their childhoods.'

## RESPONSE OF PSYCHOLOGISTS TO RECENT LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS

The response from the professional community to the legislative efforts of the Mental Health Consumer Protection Act has been swift and clear. In fact, the American Psychological Association Council of Representatives approved the following resolution, February 17-19, 1995:

**NOW THEREFORE**, the American Psychological Association is opposed to the enactment of legislation that, while seeming to protect the consumer, actually creates a bureaucracy and unnecessary barriers that interfere with consumer access to mental health services and fails to protect consumers.

*(One wonders what APA supported or opposed before this resolution.)*

### THE FMS PROBLEM

"I am enclosing copies of two pieces of correspondence — one from two years ago and one from March of this year. What on earth has happened to change a loving, generous daughter into an almost unrecognizable, hate-filled person who seems to have forgotten everything positive that happened in her life? Not only is she estranged from me and her brothers and sisters who love her and would like to help her, but her false accusations are now taking their toll on my relationship with my grandchildren. This is the second most devastating thing that could happen in my life, second only to losing my daughter.

"Without talking to members of her family, how can you gather a psychiatric family history? What do you know about the family history of depression? How can you know that the bizarre things that she claims are true?"

### BEFORE THERAPY

December 1992

Dear Mom,

Thank you for your love and support. I love who you are, not just as mom but as you. I am so grateful to have you in my life and in the lives of my children. I don't know if they'll ever put your name in a history book, but in my life you are not only one of the greatest women, but one of the greatest people. You have taught me so much about just being a good person.

(signed) Love, first name

### AFTER STARTING MEMORY THERAPY

March 1994

At this time and for an indefinite period of time I do not wish to have contact of any sort between us. I find it too painful because I believe you are being false. I have also decided that my well being is more important to my family than the gifts and letters you send the kids. Please discontinue...I give up the hope I've had for a real relationship with you.

(signed) first, last names

### CALLS TO THE FMS FOUNDATION

First time contacts to the Foundation have been averaging between 80 to 100 each week for the past few months. There continue to be steady reports of retractions and people who are resuming contact with their families, but by far the greatest increase in calls is coming from students. Following is a two-day sample of phone calls from students.

**From a final year law student (Australia):** I am writing my thesis for my law degree on False Memory Syndrome and hoping to present a paper which takes into account all related interdisciplinary fields. I would appreciate any relevant material.

**From a Counseling graduate student (Missouri):** One of our requirements for graduation is a scholarly paper and I have chosen False Memory syndrome as my topic.

**From a Doctoral student in Counseling Psychology (Tennessee):** I am currently investigating False Memory Syndrome, repressed memories and therapeutic abuse as part of my doctoral research. I do believe therapeutic/professional abuse is a significant problem.

**From a high school senior (Illinois):** I am doing my senior research paper on False Memory Syndrome. Please send me information as soon as possible.

**From a graduate student in Counseling (British Columbia):** I'm doing a research project, and I would like to talk to some families and retractors who are involved with False Memory Syndrome.

### Articles now available through FMSF

#94.891 (\$5.00) Salkowski, *Arizona Daily Star*, "Where memory lies" a 3-part series, Dec 4-6, 1994.

#480.000 (\$2.00) Berliner & Loftus, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, "Sexual abuse accusation, desperately seeking reconciliation.

#505.000 (\$3.00) Crews, *NY Review of Books*, Revenge of the Repressed.

#506.000 (\$3.00) Crews, *NY Review of Books*, Revenge of the Repressed: Part II.

#517.050 (\$1.00) Dinwiddie, *Bulletin of Am Acad of Psy & Law*, "Multiple Personality Disorder: Scientific & Medicolegal Issues.

#550.100 (\$2.00) Lanning, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, "Ritual abuse: A law enforcement view or perspective.

#578.000 (\$4.00) Powell, *Psychological Reports*, "Did Freud mislead patients to confabulate memories of abuse?

## LEGAL CORNER

FMSF Staff

### Former patient sues her therapist

March 9, 1995

reported in *The Columbian* by Bruce Westfall

Patricia Davison Rice, 50, and her husband are suing therapist Regina S. Gamage in Clark County (WA) Superior Court for evoking false memories of "satanic, ritualistic abuse," that made her temporarily insane. Rice became convinced that she was being pursued by members of a cult who would harm her or her children and in a psychotic-like state caused a multiple vehicle accident in Tigard, Oregon in which one person died. In April 1993 Rice was found guilty but insane of a charge of first-degree murder. The suit claims that the therapist conducted therapy or hypnotherapy without Rice's consent. Rice is currently on 20 years probation and remains under mental health treatment. She is asking reimbursement for medical expenses, pain and disability and damages for future earning.

### Try to remember: Allegations of decades-old sex abuse based on 'repressed' memories...

March 6, 1995

*Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly* by Claire P. Rattigan

The sensational case of a 37-year-old woman who accused her father of raping her from when she was in diapers until she was a teenager has been dismissed voluntarily in Middlesex Superior Court on October 6, 1994. The woman claimed that with the help of an older sister, she had committed murder at the age of 4 and was in a pornographic ring involving a former mayor of Lowell, MA and a former congressman. She also claimed she was sodomized by her uncle and a brother.

The woman claimed only scant recollection until she began seeing a therapist in 1990, when, she says, it became clear what had happened and how it has affected her. Defendant, 67, and his wife deny the allegations.

According to an October report in the *Lowell Sun*, neither side would explain the sudden decision which came as the two sides were selecting a jury, other than to say there was no monetary settlement. Sources familiar with the case said the judge's decision to bar certain testimony had hurt the woman's case so her attorneys convinced her to drop the case. The father

reciprocated by dropping his countersuit accusing his daughter of making false accusations.

According to the Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly, after the MA Supreme Judicial Court adopted the Daubert test in 1994, a special pretrial hearing is required to determine the scientific validity of evidence to be presented. Judge Mary Lou Rup noted for the record that she would have admitted testimony concerning the phenomenon of repressed and recovered memories.

### Woman sues therapists over 500 personalities claim.

March 8, 1995

reported in *Houston Chronicle* by Deborah Tedford

A federal lawsuit has been filed by Lynn Carl seeking \$18 million from psychologist Judith Peterson, Spring Shadows Glen and at least 23 other mental health practitioners and businesses, most of them in Houston. Carl said that she spent more than \$2 million on mental health treatment after therapists convinced her she was a Satan worshiper ritually abused since childhood. Carl claims that she was hypnotized. According to Carl, when she told her therapists she did not believe any such events had happened, she was told that her memories had been repressed in order to deal with the abuse. She said she was told that her personality had fragmented into different ones in order to cope with the ritual murder, cannibalism and torture. Even though she had no memory of abusing her own children, Carl claims that

therapists forced her to report herself to the police as a child abuser. Carl believes that her mental state deteriorated during her two years of treatment. She is now divorced and not allowed to see her children. Lynn Carl's attorney is Skip Simpson of Dallas.

"The court in *Daubert* is telling judges not to be so deferential to the scientists," says David Faigman, a professor at Hastings College of the Law. "I would say that as a theory it's going to be very difficult to introduce repressed memory as scientific evidence. The bottom line is that a federal judge now has to ask, 'Where are the data, what do they look like?' If counsel's answer is, 'Well, it's on the basis of clinical expertise,' then under *Daubert*, that evidence will not get in. No research, so far as I can tell, has demonstrated that repressed memories are accurate or testable." Clinicians wanting to introduce such testimony will have to do so as specialists, Faigman says, using their clinical data to draw a particular conclusion.

Page 86 *California Lawyer*, March 1995,  
"Fade Away: The rise and fall of the repressed  
memory theory in the courtroom"  
by Mark MacNamara

### Couple convicted of raping grandchildren seek retrial

March 16, 1995

reported in *Boston Globe* by John Ellement

In 1993, Raymond and Shirley Souza, both 63, were convicted by Middlesex Superior Court Judge Elizabeth Dolan in a jury-waived trial on charges that they had raped and assaulted two of their grandchildren.

(According to reports in 1993, the children claimed, after repeated interviews, that they were kept in a cage in the basement and raped with feet and elbows and a big machine. No investigators ever went to the Souza home.)

The Souzas have been under house arrest since that time. They appealed the decision and on March 15, they were represented by William Kunstler and Daniel Williams at a hearing before the State Appeals Court.

(According to reports of people who attended the March 15 hearing, one of the arguments for the appeal is that Ray and Shirley were not tried as separate people but that the two of them were treated as one. Their differing circumstances were not taken into consideration. The other argument for the appeal is that there was no allowance for a "recovered memory" defense. Prior to the allegations by the Souza's grandchildren, the mother of the children, age 24, had a dream that her parents had abused her as a child. Therapy notes indicate that she claimed to have had a normal childhood until this dream.)

A decision on the appeal will be given sometime within the next three months.

### Fells Acre Case

March 14, 1995

*The Wall Street Journal* Dorothy Rabinowitz  
*Boston Globe*, March 19, 1995

These articles provide an update of the Fells Acre day care case in which Violet Amirault, 63, former proprietor of the Fells Acre day care in Malden MA, her daughter and son who worked there, were convicted of rape and sexual assaults on small children. The jury trial was heard before Judge Dolan in 1986.

The case against the Amiraults began in 1984 when the parent of a 5-year old child filed a complaint against Gerald Amirault, father of two and expecting a third. Mr. Amirault had changed the child's wet underpants. Several versions of the events were reported by the child, and police instructed parents to ask their children about a magic room, a secret room and a clown. Later, after intensive interviews, these elements were found in the children's stories. Transcripts of interviews show the children were asked repeatedly about possible abuse and that they repeatedly denied it.

It was argued at trial that 19 children were raped by adults and assaulted with knives without injury and without anyone telling or noticing. The prosecution searched for evidence of child pornography but found only photos of birthday parties and such. Prosecutor Hardoon was quoted as saying, "Just because no evidence of photographs was found doesn't mean that there were none."

Violet Amirault, 63, and her daughter were sentenced to 8-20 years. Tried separately, Gerald, Violet's son, received 30-40 years. Nearly a decade after sentencing, parole has been denied Violet and her daughter because they continue to affirm their innocence. The parole report of Violet reads, "Parole denied. Vigorously denies the offense(s). Until such time as she is able to take responsibility for her crimes and engages in long term therapy to address the causative factors, she will remain a risk to the community if released."

### Autistic boy's testimony upheld

March 11, 1995

*Kansas City Star*

The Kansas Supreme Court has upheld the use of the trial testimony from an autistic witness using the technique of Facilitated Communication. The testimony of a 12-year old boy was used to help convict a person of sexual abuse. The boy used the FC keyboard and responded with "yes" or "no" to questions he was asked. The convicted person worked at the Institute of Logopedics in Wichita where the boy is a resident.

Facilitated Communication is a highly controversial technique that has been discredited in many scientific tests. The tests have shown that what is written using the keyboard comes from the adult facilitator and not the autistic person. The American Psychological Association has issued a statement that the program has no known value.

### Dreams and Flashbacks and the OJ Trial

March 16, 1995

Courtroom Television Network: Journal Graphics  
excerpt from Transcript #35-3  
Commentary of trial proceedings

CORDOBA: I dreamt about it [that Fuhrman had made racist remarks] ...I started to get, you know, like flashbacks of what transpired.

PHILLIPS: Are you sure this isn't a dream?

CORDOBA: No, this is no dream. I don't think it's a dream. Uh No.

PHILLIPS: How is it that you remember a rather unremarkable first meeting with Mark Fuhrman, and yet you forget about this upsetting incident in which you say he not only uses the 'n' word, but brandishes his weapon?

Cordoba: Throughout my active duty career, and being stationed in different places in the United States, I've always run into very harsh reaction to a black and white situation. And the only way I could always, say, maintain a level of calmness, is put things out of my mind.

PHILLIPS: You're saying that you just blocked it from your mind?

CORDOBA: That's correct

PHILLIPS: Because it's painful?

CORDOBA: That's right.

PHILLIPS: If you are capable of blocking this out of your mind, are you also capable of remembering it wrong?

CORDOBA: That's a good question. I could be capable of doing that, but I don't think so.

... MICHAEL MARCUS, Criminal Defense Attorney...The prosecution should probably go in front of Ito, if the defense wants to call him [Cordoba], and ask for a hearing outside the presence of the jury to say that his recovered memory is unreliable, because it's based upon a syndrome called 'recovered memory syndrome,' which is now being discredited.

In this case, Cordoba says, 'I blocked it out of my mind. I only recalled it when I dreamt about it.' And then he

says to Mr. Phillips, 'I may not have heard it correctly, or recalled it correctly,' all of which raises the specter - one, that the recovery of this event is not reliable, even if you assume that there is such a concept.

Right now, the psychiatrists and the psychologists seem to be going on the side of, 'This is a bogus syndrome, and we don't believe it. We think it's suspect.' And if they bring up this kind of argument to Ito, it could very well keep Cordoba's testimony out."

### Supreme Court rejects Ohio man's appeal in repressed-memories case

March 1995

The United States Supreme Court recently rejected, without comment, the appeal of Dennis Hood which grew out of a "repressed memory" jury award against him by an Ohio trial court in a civil action for battery and intentional infliction of emotional distress which had been originally filed in 1989. (The person bringing the original charge, Ms. Herald, claimed to have been abused for 12 years starting in 1962 when she was 3, but that it was so terrible that she forced herself to forget what had been done to her.) Previously, the Court of Appeals for Ohio's Ninth Appellate District refused to overturn the verdict and the Ohio Supreme Court, relying on its decision in *Ault v Jasko*, 70 Ohio St. 3d 114, 637 N.E. 2d 870 (1994), dismissed Hood's request for review as having been improvidently granted.

An analysis of the decision provides valuable guidelines for those involved in defending themselves against such allegations. It should serve as a stern warning of the pitfalls that can befall anyone involved in this type of litigation and a constant reminder of the importance of being vigilant at every step of the proceedings, in and out of the courtroom.

First, Hood made admissions of abuse in front of witnesses. At trial he claimed to have made the statements "only because he thought it would help in Herald's therapy." There was also a telephone call surreptitiously taped in which Hood made statements that were ambiguous and could not be explained. Whatever his good intentions may have been, Hood damaged his defense and provided substantial evidence which was used against him by his accuser.

In addition, the record makes no mention if there was any direct medical challenge to the validity of the phenomenon of repressed memory. Herald's therapists were able to testify that an evaluation of her physical and emotional responses indicated that she was the victim of childhood sexual abuse. In fact, the court's decision reports that Hood's own expert made findings consistent with the accuser's witness. Finally, Hood attempted to raise a constitutional due process issue related to the misapplication of the discovery rule at the appellate level. However, the Court of Appeals held that he did not preserve that argument at the trial level and waived his right to have it reviewed on appeal. Therefore, whatever legal merit his arguments may have had, it could not be considered by the court.

### Treating therapist found negligent in suit brought by former patient

A Texas District Court jury on February 28, 1995, found treating therapist, Michael Moore, M.S., M.Div., L.P.C., guilty of negligence and that his actions were the proximate cause of damage to his former client, Diana Halbrooks. Ms. Halbrooks was awarded \$90,865 for past medical expenses, lost wages, mental anguish, physical pain and mental anguish. Her husband was awarded \$15,000 for loss of consortium. A hospital and psychologist had settled prior to trial. The jury found that treating therapist, Mike Moore, bore 60% of the responsibility for the damage to Ms. Halbrooks.

The complaint states that Ms. Halbrooks was not treated by Mr. Moore for her presenting problem but that instead he began to convince her that she suffered from MPD and had been the victim of childhood sexual abuse. It was alleged that Moore was negligent in his examination, evaluation and treatment. The treatment provided included improper exposure to "support" groups and to certain therapeutic techniques, all of which, it was claimed, caused her to believe that she suffered from other problems and to become overly dependent on her therapist, Mr. Moore. "Rather than assist his patient in determining if there may be rational explanations for Diana Halbrooks' thoughts and undergo an analysis of the possibility that her 'memories' were faulty, Moore continued to discount her attempts at understanding and dominate her thoughts in the belief that the 'memories' that he had created were literal reality." In fact, it was argued, that the therapist created new problems and thereby caused harm to Ms. Halbrooks and her family.

### FMSF Amicus Brief

The FMS Foundation has filed its first Amicus Curiae Brief before the Texas Supreme Court in the matter, *Vesecky vs Vesecky*. An amicus brief is a paper that provides background information to the court on the issues involved with a case. A brief does not argue the merits of either side in the case under consideration. An amicus brief can only be filed at the appeal level.

The Amicus Brief was prepared by the FMSF legal resource team. The brief includes a review of scientific literature regarding the reliability of repressed memories and is based on legal research conducted by the Foundation.

The Legal Resource Team has prepared many other materials that may be of interest. Some of this information is from the 800 "repressed memory" cases that they have been tracking. A lot of the questions that people call to ask the Foundation can be answered in these papers. Since many people seem to be unaware of the availability of these papers, we are printing the list in this newsletter.

*Material listed below may be ordered from FMS Foundation.*

#600 \$200.00

**Summary of Legal Resources** for those accused of sexual abuse of children based upon repressed memories of long duration.

Review of relevant statutes, case law and bibliographic references for most important issues arising in "repressed memory" cases. Topics covered include: application of the discovery rule and statute of limitations, admissibility of expert testimony and syndrome evidence, admissibility of hypnotically induced testimony, evidentiary issues, access to records, the use of mediation as an alternative, duty of care to a third party, standards of care. The materials also include a copy of the 1993 FMS Foundation Legal Survey, relevant resolutions and statements by professional organizations, copies of filings and declarations from two cases which review the theory of repression and evaluate the issues and evidence presented. Materials prepared by FMSF are copyrighted.

#605 \$20.00

**Brief of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation as Amicus Curiae in Support of Petitioner (Vesecky v Vesecky)**

Brief of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation as Amicus Curiae in Support of Petitioner in the matter Vesecky v. Vesecky, Supreme Court of Texas, No 94-0856 submitted by Thomas A. Pavlinic, Esq. on February 6, 1995. Brief reviews current scientific understanding of the reliability of "recovered repressed memory" and considers Point of Error set forth by petitioner: The Court of Appeals erred in holding the discovery rule applied in this case.

#610 \$45.00

#### **Amicus Curiae Briefs**

Set of nine amicus briefs includes:

Lindabury v Lindabury, No 87-2481 (3rd Dist. Ct., Florida) submitted 1988 by Legal Defense and Education Fund, National Organization for Women, et. al.

Lindabury v Lindabury, No 87-2481 (3rd Dist. Ct., Florida) brief submitted 1989 by the Florida Defense Lawyers Association

Tyson v Tyson, No. 51908-1 (Washington Supreme Ct.) brief submitted 1985 by J. Kathleen Learned, Counsel for Northwest Women's Law Center.

Tyson v Tyson, No. 51908-1 (Washington Supreme Ct.) brief submitted 1985 by Washington Assoc. of Defense Counsel.

Doe v LaBrosse, No. 90-97 (Rhode Island Supreme Ct.) brief submitted 1990 by NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, et al.

State of New Jersey v J.Q., No 34,501 (New Jersey Supreme Court) brief submitted in 1992 by the NJ Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

State of New Jersey v Michaels, No 36,633 (New Jersey Supreme Ct.) brief submitted in 1993 on behalf of (38) developmental, social, and psychological researchers, social scientists, and scholars.

Perkins v State of Texas, Nos 08-93-00305-CR & 08-93-00306-CR (174th Dist. Ct., Texas) brief submitted 1994 by R. Christopher Barden, Ph.D., J.D., LP.

Daubert v Merrell Dow Pharmaceutical, Inc., 113 S.Ct. 2786 (1993) brief submitted on behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the National Academy of Sciences in support of respondent, Jan. 19, 1993.

#611 \$50.00

**Ramona v. Ramona** legal documents, filings from a third party suit

Collection of documents filed in third party suit, Ramona v. Ramona, et. al., Superior Court of California, Napa County, No 61898 including the Second Amended Complaint, documents pertaining to duty to a third party and motion to exclude evidence, court transcript of testimony of child pediatrician, and the special verdict. Also included are articles entitled "Analysis of the Ramona decision" by Jim Simons, J.D., which were published in FMSF newsletters dated June and July/August 1994.

A set of newspaper articles chronicling the two month long trial are available separately for \$10.50. Trial transcripts may be ordered directly through the Napa County Superior Court, Napa California (707) 253-4500.

#615 \$20.00

**Table of Published Cases**, higher court decisions related to repressed memory claims

Table of published cases with cites summarizes issues and disposition of "repressed memory" cases. This table is updated on an ongoing basis and currently lists over 100 civil and criminal suits.

#616 \$10.00

**Resources for Families accused by Minor Children**

Outline and summary of current research related to children's suggestibility - especially on the effects of various interviewing techniques, statements by professional organizations on guidelines for clinical evaluation of children including with anatomically details dolls, and professional reports on litigation problems arising from accusations of child abuse. Books, videos and organizations are also cited. A listing of landmark decisions which concern evidentiary issues and rights to redress when accusations are made by a minor child are included.

#620 \$1.00

**Brief Bank Filings**, from over 40 repressed memory and malpractice cases

Cost of individual filings depends on length. Current listing and prices is available for \$1.00.

Pleadings including motions, deposition testimony, interrogatories, and unpublished decisions. Filings include complaints seeking damages under 'discovery rule' for childhood sexual abuse, complaints filed by former clients alleging psychiatric malpractice related to development of false beliefs, complaints from third party actions, motions for summary judgment on grounds that the statute of limitations expired, improper venue or mental competency, motions to restrict plaintiff's expert testimony, settlement agreements, etc. Materials are continuously added to the collection.

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

This is a column that will let you know what people are doing to counteract the harm done by FMS. Remember that three years ago, FMSF didn't exist. A group of 50 or so people found each other and today we are over 16,000. Together we have made a difference. How did this happen?

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.*

Margaret Mead

**Washington** - A Seattle group of mothers and sisters harmed by the aftermath of Recovered Memory Therapy has formed the Women's Brigade. They are wrestling with the question of why it is that this generation of feminists assume that there are hundreds of women—grandmothers, mothers and sisters—who are too weak, lazy or stupid to have noticed that their daughters or sisters were subjected to horrific sexual abuse for years in their own homes? Members of the Women's Brigade have resolved that they are not taking any more bullying from women who are supposedly advancing feminist objectives. They are working together to find peaceful, creative ways to air their concerns and to end the destruction of mother-daughter and sister-sister relationships.

**Washington** - One mom looked through B. Dalton Booksellers and saw "The Courage to Heal" and its workbook and also Bradshaw books. She could not find "Making Monsters" by Ofshe/Watters, "The Myth of Repressed Memory" by Loftus/Ketcham, "Confabulations" by Goldstein/Farmer or "Victims of Memory" by Pendergrast. She inquired of a clerk to find out why. The manager was summoned and he knew immediately what the mom was talking about. The manager gave the phone number in New York City to call (212-633-3311). The mom called and talked to Steve in Customer Service. He took down names and authors and promised to pass along the request. He cautioned that sample copies might be placed on the shelves but, if they don't sell fast enough B Dalton will not continue to make them available. Why don't readers check out B. Dalton's where you live?

**Illinois** - The Winnebago County Council on Aging is sponsoring the 31st Annual Senior Exhibition Fest. This year False Memory Syndrome families and friends will staff a booth. They will hand out information and answer questions. The Fest will be held May 12 and 13 at the Metro Center in Rockford, Illinois. Attendance is expected to be between 10,000 and 15,000 people from Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. This is a wonderful way to reach parents who have been touched by False Memory Syndrome but who don't understand what has happened.

**Illinois** - Families have been writing to educate legislators. One Congresswoman who is a member of the Illinois Con-

sumer Fraud Committee suggested that families write to their state **Consumer Fraud Committee**. Most states have these committees and it would be an excellent idea to write or call and let them know what is happening in your state. We all know things change slowly but with persistence, letters and calls, we will eventually see a greater awareness of False Memory Syndrome. Speaking of awareness, some families are writing to alert Ralph Nader, the original guardian angel of consumers. His address is Ralph Nader, PO Box 19367, Washington, DC, 20036.

**Pennsylvania** - Summer is usually the time for class reunions. When faced with filling out the typical questionnaire, one dad wrote that he was active with the False Memory Syndrome Foundation and explained what its mission was and enclosed material. One mom wrote, "5 years ago our lovely daughter, Elizabeth, falsely accused her Dad of sexually abusing her as a child as a result of repressed memory therapy. It feels like we died and went to Hell! As a result we have become active in the FMSF." I know it took enormous courage to do this, but, if you can, what a great way to get out information and help others.

*Knowing is not enough,  
We must apply.  
Willing is not enough  
We must do.*

Goethe

**Florida** - Florida families are planning to designate May as "Garage Sale Month" and to donate profits to the FMS Foundation. They hope that other families around the country will join them. Florida families have a newsletter and would be pleased to send it to interested families free of charge. For information, call 305-966-4367.

*You can make a difference. Please send me any ideas that you have had that were or might be successful so that we can tell others. Write to Katie Spanuello c/o FMSF.*

### TV's pathetic parents

They're too tolerant, they're weak and wimpy, they're mean or mouthy. Mom's often missing. Or dead. Yes, the folks are flawed. Why is the tube treating Mom and Dad this way?

In the opening episode of the new television show "My So-Called Life," the lead character, a depressed 15-year-old girl, says to herself: "Lately I can't seem to even look at my mother without wanting to stab her repeatedly."

You could call this reality, or you could call it gratuitous parent-bashing. You could also call it typical. Parents are one of the few remaining groups that are regularly ridiculed, caricatured and marginalized on television.

*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 19 1994

## RETURNING TO THE FAMILY: ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

Notes from talks by  
**Harold Lief, MD and Janet Fetkewicz, FMSF Staff**

*How many people are affected when someone makes a 'recovered memory' accusation and insists that people either believe her or him or be cut off? A case study of six families who have contacted the FMS Foundation showed that it is not unusual for between 50 to 90 people to have been affected in some way in a family. What happens to all of these people and their relationships after the accusations? What happens in families after an accuser tries to rejoin the family or retracts?*

*Harold Lief, and Janet Fetkewicz spoke at the Pennsylvania Regional Family Members Meeting on March 25, 1995. The information presented in their talks was based on clinical experience with affected families and from the results of the FMSF retractor survey. Following are notes taken during their presentations. Their complete papers are in press.*

It would be unrealistic for families to think that they will ever be the same as they were before this experience. Some families, however, may come out of this difficult time even stronger than they were before. That is certainly something to work for.

Although it marks the end of a nightmare for both accusers and family members, a retraction also marks the beginning of a process. Trust and healthy relationships are not restored overnight.

When families first experience the trauma of the accusation, they tend to have **emergency emotions**. These emotions are: Confusion; Anger and especially a feeling of betrayal; Shame because they are worried about what others might think of them; Guilt because even though they did not do what they were accused of doing, they still ask themselves, "What did I do to create this Frankenstein? I must have done something"; Fear of a number of things such as loss of their child, the reactions of others, divorce, financial disaster, and legal charges. Emergency emotions are those that ward off and deal with threats. They tend to lead to "flight and fight" reactions. They lead "away" and "against." Families at this stage often do nothing. People often refer to this period as being paralyzed. Many people try to hide what has happened in their family.

For reconciliation to happen, however, there needs to be movement "toward." For reconciliation to happen, the "emergency" emotions need to be replaced by welfare emotions of: Love, Hope, Pride and Joy. Families may have to work actively to try to turn their emotions in this direction.

Some therapists call the families that are caught in this tragedy "dysfunctional families," but every family has dysfunction. Every family has cracks. In the face of this kind of trauma, we can hope that the cracks do not lead to fissures. Sometimes they do, and the accusation acts like a crowbar and splits the family. Other times the accusation can unite the family.

Families and family systems can be examined in a number of different ways. Family therapists often look at family dynamics from the perspective of power, of intimacy, or of boundaries. No matter how one examines family dynamics, however, good communication turns out to be critically important. Good communication requires expressing feelings and this is scary for people who have been so hurt from the experience of FMS. When people express feelings they make themselves vulnerable. They have to be ready to take the risk that they may be hurt again.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that it is the siblings of accusers who tend to be the people who are the most hurt by these traumatic experiences. We don't know why this is the case. Perhaps it is the fact that parents have a kind of unconditional love for their children that is not a characteristic of sibling relationships. Perhaps it is because the siblings are torn between the generations. Perhaps it is the case that many siblings take the biggest risks in trying to keep the channels of communication open with the accuser. Sometimes even after parents accept the accuser back, the brothers and sisters are so angry at what has happened that they will not welcome the retractor back.

Parents have many concerns at the beginning of reconciliation. They ask "How should we act? How should we respond? Should we act as if nothing had happened? Should we smooth over the difficulty? Should we confront our daughter? Should we express anger or would that be bad? Will our daughter continue to believe that she was abused by us? Does she have mixed feelings? Does part of her still believe the memories?"

Parents are often hypervigilant at the beginning of reconciliation. They tend to look for signs of the old beliefs and they are worried that their child is just saying things to please them. They wonder "Will she go crazy again? Can she be trusted? How can I deal with the anger, fear and suspicion?"

Retractors also have many concerns about reconciliation. Many wonder if their families will take them back and, unfortunately, the reality is that while most do, some families refuse to accept a returning child.

"What will they expect of me? Will they want me to go into the gruesome details? Will they accept my moods? How can I deal with my own guilt? What if a family member makes me angry and it has nothing to do with the memories? Will they accept my anger or will they think I am overreacting? Will they really forgive me?"

"This was very difficult - I felt my husband didn't trust me with my son. When I decided none of it was true, he was very angry with me. I was still afraid of my parents. They were really disappointed and angry with me. Their friends hated me. My in-laws were supportive until I "got on my feet," then they got real insulting. Through all of this..the cult images kept creeping back. We finally found a psychiatrist to help - my parents and me. My parents have become more understanding now because my Mom's co-worker's daughter is going through the same thing."

A Retractor

Retractors have to deal with the aftereffects of recovered memory therapy in three areas: relational, psychological, and practical. When a person first retracts it causes profound changes in personal relationships. Usually there is a loss of the survivor group support that happens before there has been a reconciliation with family. Retractors often say they feel a loss of credibility and don't know who to trust and who trusts them. Retractors are very vulnerable at this time and there have been several suicides.

Psychologically, many retractors feel distress. They feel anxious and wonder where they belong. They feel embarrassed and ashamed. One woman, for example, knew that her memories were false for quite some time but she could not face her parents. Retractors most often are still left with the problems that brought them into therapy in the first place. They don't trust their own judgment and they feel that they have been manipulated. "How could I have been so stupid," they say.

At the practical level, they often have to make up for lost time, money and career. Many retractors express an intense need to make up for lost time.

There is no one rule or set of directions that will apply for all families. Each family is different and each family has a special set of dynamics and often there are old ways of interacting, old jealousies, that need to be dealt with. Nevertheless, there is one starting point for all families: effective communication. In order for reconciliation to happen there must be effective communication in a family. People need to express their feelings even if they are confused about them. That might mean, for example, someone says, "I'm confused. What do you want?" People must also listen to the feelings of others. It's important that no one assume what someone's feelings are. It is better to ask, "How do you feel about that?"

Good things are worth working for. Families can come out of this terrible experience and be even stronger if they are willing to make the effort. What all parties must keep in mind is that

**Reconciliation is a process - not an event.**

## FROM OUR READERS

### Reunification: My Personal Narrative from a son, 8th grade

When I was about to walk through the door to the apartment, I did not know what to expect. I had not seen my mom's parents in almost seven years, three years of that time my brother and I spent hospitalized to keep us away from them. This time included being away from them for family activities such as Christmas, Thanksgivings and Birthdays. I didn't know how my grandparents were going to react to us or what their personalities were like. I didn't even remember what they looked like. All those years we had no contact with them at all, no pictures, no letters, no telephone calls, nothing at all.

The incident that severed our ties with our grandparents

began when my mom entered therapy and hypnosis with a doctor who believed that he could retrieve memories of things that only he knew about, claiming my mom had forgotten them. My mom then started making accusations that my grandparents had participated in sexual abuse and other horrible crimes. They ended up fighting and stopped speaking to each other. With the assistance of my mom's sister, we started to make the first contact with them.

On December 26, 1992, I was lying on my bed at our hotel, awaiting the visit which would occur in a matter of minutes. I was scared and anxious about meeting them and my brother was extremely curious about meeting them. He is more open minded than me. I tend to be more cynical. As we pulled up in the driveway of the apartment complex, we were all saying a prayer as a family. We apprehensively greeted our grandparents at their apartment door and walked into the apartment.

In the living room was a beautifully decorated Christmas tree and a tray full of freshly baked holiday goodies. My grandfather is a good chef and my grandmother gives tins of their bakery items away as holiday gifts. My Grandma told us to fill the place of treats and Grandpa poured us some chocolate milk. It was real hard to sit down and talk and I kept running out of things to say, but it helped to do something normal at the same time, like eating.

My grandparents told me how they had driven 6 hours to Chicago many times to see us, but were turned away by the doctors at the hospital and that they had tried to send cards and gifts to us. They told us how they felt rejected and confused. I really understood. Grandma and Grandpa told us that they never stopped praying for us or stopped loving us. I finally heard their part of the story. I told them that I was really confused during that time, too, and that I had hated them and wanted them in prison so I could laugh at them for what I was told they had done to my mom and our family. I made sure they knew I did not believe that anymore and I knew that the doctors had done terrible things to all of us. I also told them that we were kept away from our dad's parents for about two and a half years, but were not back together. Our first visit lasted three hours. Afterward I was thoroughly exhausted.

We started writing letters and soon more visits started happening. They came for my eighth grade graduation in May. (I had been a preschooler when we broke apart.) They stayed for a four days visit. My Grandpa taught us how to fish and my brother and I both caught our first fish with him. We shared Christmas 1993 together, our first real Christmas with them since 1985.

At Christmas time this year, we celebrated Christmas and then we flew out to Baltimore. Our parents attended a False Memory Syndrome Conference that was sponsored by Johns Hopkins Hospital and while our parents were at the conference, our grandparents took my brother and me to the national Aquarium and Fort McHenry. We also had a chance to just spend time together watching TV, swimming and talking.

After the conference, we went to Washington, DC for a week. We visited the White House, the Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial, the FBI Headquarters, Arlington Cemetery, and the Shrine of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. We

also visited a few Civil War sites like Sharpsburg, Gettysburg, and Harpers Ferry. Our grandma really knows her history, especially the Civil War.

During the Civil War, families were split and often ended up having brother fight against brother and father against son. In the Civil War, you could see the injured, count the dead and know families would never be together again. Our family endured a different kind of war where we were split apart and emotionally scarred. Like our split and injured Nation, our family is getting back together, too.

A few years ago, this vacation would not have been possible because I never thought I would ever see my mom's parents again and I wasn't sure I really wanted to either. We have had to travel a long and hard road to get back together as a family, but I believe the road to reunification was well worth the journey. I am glad we are a family once more.

### **From the parents of a restored family**

In late 1994, our daughter recanted her accusations of abuse and our family was reunited during the Christmas holiday. By talking with our daughter, we have learned how she came to recover memories of events that never happened, why she began to have doubts about them, and what finally led her to reject them altogether. We hope that what we tell you may be of help to others who are still living the repressed memory nightmare."

"When we read the letter in October 1993 accusing us of abuse, it seemed incredible that our youngest daughter could believe what she had written. We had no idea that she had been seeing a therapist. Her two sisters knew about the therapy, but they did not tell us because they did not want us to be hurt by the direction that the therapy was taking. They hoped that they could help their younger sister realize that her "repressed memories" were not true. The initial shock of the letter left us depressed and in a state of mourning for the daughter we were losing. After a week or so, we decided to get professional help to try to understand what had happened. We contacted our Employee Assistance Program and were referred to a highly respected psychiatrist in our state. We met with the psychiatrist and when he read the letter he said that there was a great deal of anger in it and suggested that we not try to communicate with her at that time. This seemed OK because our older daughter was still in communication with her. The psychiatrist recommended that we get the whole family together to talk to him. Because the letter contained veiled threats of legal action, he also suggested that we see a competent trial attorney. We made an appointment with an attorney who educated us about the law in our state and recommended that we write to our daughter denying her accusations. The attorney told us that failure to refute her accusations might be construed by some as a tacit admission of guilt.

We made several attempts to make our daughter's therapist aware that her diagnosis of abuse was wrong. Our old-

est daughter made an appointment with the therapist whose mindset was obvious when she said to her, "Indeed I am an expert in this field and this child was definitely abused. Your parents are very devious people and more than likely you were also abused as a child, but are also repressing the memories." We sent a certified letter to the counseling center where the therapist worked protesting our innocence and offering to meet with the therapist. Our letter was refused and returned to us unopened.

In December of 1993, our accusing daughter and her husband moved from our state to another state. Our oldest daughter attended a counseling session with her new therapist to tell her that there had never been any abuse. Our middle daughter spoke with this new therapist on the phone and told her the same things. In October of 1994, our accusing daughter wrote to us and said that she would like to reconcile. We met with her and her new therapist for five hours. The things that were discussed at this meeting were plausible explanations for her nightmares and other fears. Two weeks later, she phoned us saying she was absolutely sure that she had not been abused and she asked us if we could ever forgive her for all the pain she had caused.

We had always wanted our daughter back, but we made it clear that there had to be a complete and absolute understanding that there had never been any abuse. We wanted to make sure that there were not any ghosts that might cause problems later on. When she visited with us at Christmas, she said that the first doubts came when she moved to the new state. Even though she was dealing with the stress of moving and a new job, she said she started to feel better as her memories began to fade. She said that this did not make sense to her at the time because her first therapist told her that she had to complete the process of "recovering her repressed memories" before she would become healed. She also told us that her doubts about the abuse were increased because we had respected her wishes that we not try to contact her and because we did not react angrily to her accusations as her first therapist had told her we would. During this whole nightmare, we never let our emotions control what we did. We wanted to be sure that if we ever did get our family back together we could minimize the damage and never have to regret anything we had done.

We have heard from family and friends that our daughter has written telling them that she was wrong, that she is sorry for the pain she has caused and that she thanks them for supporting us. We are proud that she had the courage to do this, but we think it is even more meaningful because it shows how completely she has rejected any ideas of abuse. Although this experience can never be forgotten, we have put it behind us and our family relationships are almost back to normal. We still have to reassure our daughter from time to time that everything is O.K. We feel that our family is making good progress in the healing process.

**A Mother and Father**

## Letters and Cards

My husband, my 34 year old son and I got a letter from our daughter in September 1992 accusing my husband of sexual abuse and me as an enabler. We were shocked and devastated.

At an enlightening and helpful Valley Forge conference where we spoke with retrackors, they encouraged us to write letters to feed the tiny kernel of truth they assured us was always there. I did this about every two months without any response mentioning friends, family events and always ending with love.

In the last three months, we have received Christmas and birthday cards and finally a letter saying she was "tired of maintaining a wall of silence." She proposed a meeting with us in the presence of her therapist. We agreed.

I think it's important to think positively and not demand apologies, explanations and a pound of flesh as the price of family unity. We are hopeful and only want our daughter back. We're not out of the woods yet, but hopefully with patience, we can be a family again.

A Mom

### Trying to cope after Gloria Steinem's HBO video

My daughter's situation is classic in many ways. Attractive, talented, she first had mental health problems in her first year at college, where I know she abused alcohol and strongly suspect the use of drugs. Since that time she has lived at home, lived on her own, married and had two children, lived with her brother and his wife, lived with her sister, divorced, and now lives on welfare and disability in another state. She has been in many hospitals and been in constant therapy. Her father and I and her three siblings were emotionally and financially supportive because we loved her.

In August 1991, her social worker therapist pronounced her Multiple Personality and she became one, with increasing numbers of "alters." We were to have no contact with her while the search through her childhood for an abuser was begun. We tried to help, sending pictures and reviewing family, friends, neighbors and even foreign students we had hosted through the years. The social worker would not respond to our letters.

Dr. McHugh's list of "Do and Don't" in the March FMSF Newsletter was completely reversed in my daughter's case. The "Dont's" were done and the "Dos" were not done during the therapy with her social worker and especially during two hospital stays in Dallas, Texas.

In October 1992, she told us by phone that she had visions of her father abusing her and of a skull and blood. Again, her social worker would not respond to our letters or contact her sister and two brothers for a family history.

In April 1993, our daughter called to tell us she would be appearing on a Home Box Office video. We wrote to H.B.O., the journalist, and the psychiatrist and therapist in Texas. Not one of these persons responded.

In an age when both politicians and preachers - at least some of them - seem increasingly keen on separating "them" from "us," when lives are destroyed by fanciful "recovered memories" of satanism and sexual misdeeds, Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible" remains a cautionary tale.

Scott Cantrell, *Kansas City Star*, 3/5/95

In July 1993, the hour long video that was the idea of and featured Gloria Steinem as the narrator was aired many times. It showed some of the pictures we had sent our daughter and it showed her under sodium amytal and in group therapy with other "victims." It showed her as a frightening ugly "alter" and then the film culminated in her receiving her degree in psychology at a college graduation — a graduation she had told us we could not attend because she could not get tickets. The film implied that my husband and I were guilty.

My husband became ill that November. He had back surgery and subsequently was diagnosed with cancer. He died on May 30, 1994 of extremely rare adrenal cancer.

We were gratified that our daughter came home before he died. My husband was able to directly say, "I never abused you." Our daughter said she believed him and claimed she had never accused him. It was a bitter-sweet family reunion with all our family together after so many years.

In August, I learned that the HBO tape had traveled to Great Britain as an instructional tool. My daughter's therapist from Texas presented the tape. He knew my husband had died and stated that my daughter believed it must

have been her father who abused her.

In November my daughter was home very briefly. I could not really hug her.

In December, I attended the Baltimore FMS conference. I met so many wonderful people. That inspired me to try again to aid the efforts for responsible therapy and journalism. I wrote to Gloria Steinem because the video had been her idea and she was the narrator. She has not answered and so I will add Gloria Steinem's name to the long list of those who feel that they can accuse my husband and me of terrible things but who do not feel that they have any moral or ethical responsibility to talk to me.

Legal action is not the optimum action, for as in any war, court suits often result in further carnage on both sides. I do not want to see my family exploited any further. I have five wonderful grandchildren. Protecting them and others from further damage from the HBO tape is what I strive to do. How can the truth be found, however, or even searched for in the void of no response? How can professionals and professional organizations both in psychiatry and journalism allow their members to behave in this way with impunity? The silence of the colleagues of those responsible for this video implies their consent.

It seems I have lost my dear husband as well as the daughter I love. Will further ramifications be felt in my family as a result of this HBO video that maligns us in such an inferential manner? How will this video affect other shattered families? No, I am not coping very well yet.

A Mother and Grandmother

## APRIL 1995 FMSF MEETINGS

FAMILIES, RETRACTORS &  
PROFESSIONALS  
WORKING TOGETHER

### STATE MEETINGS

#### INDIANA - INDIANAPOLIS

Sunday, April 23, 1:00 - 4:30 pm  
Nickie (317) 471-0922 (phone);  
334-9839 (fax)  
Gene (317) 861-4720 or 861-5832

#### MINNESOTA - MINNEAPOLIS AREA

Saturday, April 1 - begins 9 am  
Terry & Collette (507) 642-3630  
Dan & Joan (612) 631-2247

### UNITED STATES

Call person listed for meeting time & location.  
key: (MO) = monthly; (bi-MO) = bi-monthly

#### ARKANSAS - LITTLE ROCK

Al & Lela (501) 363-4368

#### CALIFORNIA

##### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

##### SAN FRANCISCO & BAY AREA (Bi-MO)

###### EAST BAY AREA

Judy (510) 254-2605

###### SAN FRANCISCO & NORTH BAY

Gideon (415) 389-0254

Charles (415) 984-6626 (d); 435-9618 (e)

###### SOUTH BAY AREA

Jack & Pat (408) 425-1430

Last Saturday, (Bi-MO)

#### CENTRAL COAST

Carole (805) 967-8058

#### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

###### BURBANK formerly VALENCIA

Jane & Mark (805) 947-4376

4th Saturday (MO) 10:00 am

###### CENTRAL ORANGE COUNTY

Chris & Alan (714) 733-2925

1st Friday (MO) - 7:00 pm

###### ORANGE COUNTY formerly LAGUNA BEACH

Jerry & Eileen (714) 494-9704

3rd Sunday (MO) - 6:00 pm

###### COVINA GROUP formerly RANCHO CUCAMONGA

Floyd & Libby (818) 330-2321

1st Monday, (MO) - 7:30 pm

###### WEST ORANGE COUNTY

Carole (310) 596-8048

2nd Saturday (MO)

#### COLORADO - DENVER

Ruth (303) 757-3622

4th Saturday, (MO) 1:00 pm

#### CONNECTICUT - AREA CODE 203

Earl 329-8365

Paul 458-9173

#### FLORIDA

##### DADE-BROWARD AREA

Madeline (305) 966-4FMS

##### DELRAY BEACH PRT

Esther (407) 364-8290

2nd & 4th Thursday (MO) 1:00 pm

#### TAMPA BAY AREA

Bob & Janet (813) 856-7091

#### ILLINOIS

##### CHICAGO METRO AREA (South of Eisenhower)

Roger (708) 366-3717

2nd Sunday [MO] 2:00 pm

#### INDIANA - INDIANAPOLIS AREA

Nickie (317) 471-0922 (phone);  
334-9839 (fax)

Gene (317) 861-4720 or 861-5832

##### SEE STATE MEETINGS LIST

#### IOWA - DES MOINES

Betty & Gayle (515) 270-6976  
2nd Saturday (MO) 11:30 am Lunch

#### KANSAS - KANSAS CITY

Pat (913) 738-4840 or Jan (816) 931-1340  
Sunday, April 2 (MO)

#### KENTUCKY

##### LEXINGTON - Dixie (606) 356-9309

##### LOUISVILLE - Bob (502) 957-2378

Last Sunday (MO) 2:00 pm

#### MAINE - AREA CODE 207

##### BANGOR - Irvine & Arlene 942-8473

##### FREEPORT - Wally 865-4044

3rd Sunday (MO)

##### YARMOUTH - Betsy 846-4268

#### MARYLAND - ELLICOT CITY AREA

Margie (410) 750-8694

#### MASSACHUSETTS / NEW ENGLAND

##### CHELMSFORD

Jean (508) 250-1055

#### MICHIGAN - GRAND RAPIDS AREA - JENISON

Catharine (616) 363-1354

2nd Monday (MO)

#### MINNESOTA - MINNEAPOLIS AREA

Terry & Collette (507) 642-3630

Dan & Joan (612) 631-2247

#### MISSOURI

##### KANSAS CITY

Pat (913) 738-4840 or Jan (816) 931-1340

2nd Sunday (MO)

##### ST. LOUIS AREA

Karen (314) 432-8789 or

Mae (314) 837-1976

3rd Sunday [MO] 1:30 pm

Retractors support group also meeting.

#### SPRINGFIELD - AREA CODES 417 AND 501

Dorothy & Pete (417) 882-1821

4th Sunday (MO) 5:30 pm

#### NEW JERSEY (So.) See WAYNE, PA

#### NEW YORK

##### DOWNSTATE NY - WESTCHESTER, ROCKLAND

Barbara (914) 761-3627 -

call for bi-MO mtg info

##### UPSTATE / ALBANY AREA

Elaine (518) 399-5749

Family group meets bi-monthly, call for info

#### OHIO - CINCINNATI

Bob (513) 541-5272

2nd Sunday (MO) 2:00-4:30 pm

#### OKLAHOMA - AREA CODE 405

##### OKLAHOMA CITY

Len 364-4063                   Dee 942-0531

HJ 755-3816                   Rosemary 439-2459

#### PENNSYLVANIA

##### HARRISBURG AREA

Paul & Betty (717) 691-7660

##### PITTSBURGH

Rick & Renee (412) 563-5616

##### WAYNE (includes So. Jersey)

Jim & Joanne (610) 783-0396

Saturday, May 13 - 1:00 pm

#### TENNESSEE - MIDDLE TENNESSEE

Kate (615) 665-1160

1st Wednesday (MO) 1:00 pm

#### TEXAS

##### CENTRAL TEXAS

Nancy & Jim (512) 478-8395

##### DALLAS/Ft. WORTH

Lee & Jean (214) 279-0250

##### HOUSTON

Jo or Beverly (713) 464-8970

#### VERMONT - BURLINGTON AREA

Kim (802) 878-1089

Tuesday, March 28 (Bi-MO) 7-9 pm

#### WISCONSIN

Katie & Leo (414) 476-0285

### CANADA

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA

##### VANCOUVER & MAINLAND

Ruth (604) 925-1539

Last Saturday (MO) 1:00-4:00 pm

##### VICTORIA & VANCOUVER ISLAND

John (604) 721-3219

3rd Tuesday (MO) 7:30 pm

#### MANITOBA

##### WINNIPEG

Muriel (204) 261-0212

Call for meeting information

#### ONTARIO

##### LONDON

Adrian (519) 471-6338

May 21 (Bi-MO)

##### OTTAWA

Eileen (613) 836-3294

##### TORONTO - NORTH YORK

Pat (416) 444-9078

ANNUAL MEETING - TORONTO, ON

Saturday, April 22, 1995, 1-5 pm

Holiday Inn, Warden Ave (South from 401)

Pat (416) 444-9078

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### AUSTRALIA

Ken & June, P O Box 363, Unley, SA 5061

#### NETHERLANDS

Task Force False Memory Syndrome of

"Ouders voor Kinderen"

Mrs. Anna de Jong, (0) 20-693 5692

#### NEW ZEALAND

Mrs. Colleen Waugh, (09) 416-7443

#### UNITED KINGDOM

The British False Memory Society

Roger Scofford (0225) 868-682

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#### Deadline for MAY1995 Issue:

Wednesday, April 19th

Mail or Fax meeting notice 2 months

before scheduled meeting:

Attn: Nancy, c/o FMSF

Do you have access to e-mail? Send a message to  
 pjf@cis.upenn.edu  
 if you wish to receive electronic versions of this  
 newsletter and notices of radio and television broad-  
 casts about FMS. All the message need say is "add  
 to the FMS list". It would be useful, but not neces-  
 sary, if you add your full name (all addresses and  
 names will remain strictly confidential).

The False Memory Syndrome Foundation is a qualified 501(c)3 corporation with its principal offices in Philadelphia and governed by its Board of Directors. While it encourages participation by its members in its activities, it must be understood that the Foundation has no affiliates and that no other organization or person is authorized to speak for the Foundation without the prior written approval of the Executive Director. All membership dues and contributions to the Foundation must be forwarded to the Foundation for its disposition.

The FMSF Newsletter is published 10 times a year by the False Memory Syndrome Foundation. A subscription is included in membership fees. Others may subscribe by sending a check or money order, payable to FMS Foundation, to the address below. 1995 subscription rates: USA: 1 year \$30; Student \$10; Canada: 1 year \$35 (in U.S. dollars); Foreign: 1 year \$40. (Single issue price: \$3 plus postage.

#### What IF?

**What if**, parents who are facing lawsuits and want legal information about FMS cases, had to be told, "I'm sorry, there isn't any such thing available?"

**What if**, your son or daughter began to doubt his or her memories and called FMSF only to get a recording, "This number is no longer in operation?"

**What if**, a journalist asks you where to get information about the FMS phenomenon, and you had to answer, "Sorry, I don't know?"

**What if**, you want to ask a question that only an expert, familiar with FMS can answer, and find out that FMSF can no longer provide that information? Where would you turn?

**What if** the False Memory Syndrome Foundation did not exist? A frightening thought, isn't it?

Please support our Foundation. We cannot survive without your support!

*Reprinted from the August 1994 PFA (MI) Newsletter*

#### YEARLY FMSF MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Professional - Includes Newsletter \$125 \_\_\_\_\_

Family - Includes Newsletter \$100 \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Contribution: \_\_\_\_\_

Visa: Card # & expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please include: Name, address, state, country, phone, fax

#### FMS Foundation

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Philadelphia, PA 19104-3315

Phone 215-387-1865

ISSN # 1069-0484

Pamela Freyd, Ph.D., Executive Director

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April 1, 1995

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We must hear from everyone  
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